Statewide Crash Categories

Table 1 compares major crash categories and measures of exposure for 2003 through 2007. The bulk of the decrease in 2006 was due to the change in the property damage reporting threshold from $750 to $1,500. The total number of traffic crashes in 2007 increased by 9.2% from 2006. However, fatal crashes decreased by 8.8% and injury crashes decreased by 3.2%. Total fatalities decreased 5.6% from the previous year, while the number of injuries decreased by 2.6%. The number of property damage crashes increased by 17.6%.

Table 1
Idaho Traffic Crash Data and Measures of Exposure: 2003-2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2006-2007	Avg. Change 2003-2006
Total Crashes	26,700	28,332	28,238	24,225	26,452	9.2%	-2.8%
Fatal Crashes	261	240	243	239	218	-8.8%	-2.8%
Persons Killed (Fatalities)	293	260	275	267	252	-5.6%	-2.8%
Injury Crashes	9,661	9,843	9,810	9,536	9,234	-3.2%	-0.4%
Persons Injured	14,601	14,734	14,436	13,950	13,594	-2.6%	-1.5%
Property-Damage-Only Crashes (>$750)	16,778	18,249	18,185	14,450	17,000	17.6%	-4.0%
Idaho Population (thousands)	1,366	1,393	1,429	1,466	1,499	2.2%	2.4%
Licensed Drivers (thousands)	926	948	983	1008	1028	1.9%	3.5%
Vehicle Miles of Travel (millions)	14,400	14,825	14,969	15,259	15,837	3.8%	2.0%
Urban VMT (millions)	5,467	5,705	5,980	6,188	6,467	4.5%	4.2%
Rural VMT (miilions)	8,933	9,120	8,988	9,072	9,371	3.3%	0.5%
Registered Vehicles (thousands)	1,316	1,386	1,421	1,436	1,594	11.0%	3.0%

Changes in the number of crashes can often be correlated with changes in state population, the number of drivers, number of registered vehicles, and the statewide Annual Vehicle Miles of Travel (AVMT). In 2007, the number of licensed drivers increased by 1.9%, the population grew by 2.2%, and the number of registered motor vehicles increased by 11.0%.

The statewide AVMT increased by 3.8% in 2007. Commercial vehicles accounted for 19% of the statewide AVMT in 2007.

Fatality and Injury Rates

Table 2 shows the fatality and injury rates for 2003-2007.

Table 2
Fatality and Injury Rates per 100 Million AVMT 2003-2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2006-2007	Avg. Change 2003-2006
Fatality Rate	2.03	1.75	1.84	1.75	1.59	-9.1%	-4.6%
Injury Rate	101.39	99.39	96.44	91.42	85.84	-6.1%	-3.4%

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate fatality and injury rates per 100 million AVMT for the U.S. and Idaho. The 2007 U.S. fatality rate and U.S. injury rates were not available at the time of publication

Figure 1
Traffic Fatality Rates per 100 Million Annual Vehicle Miles of Travel
For Idaho and the U.S.: 1998-2007

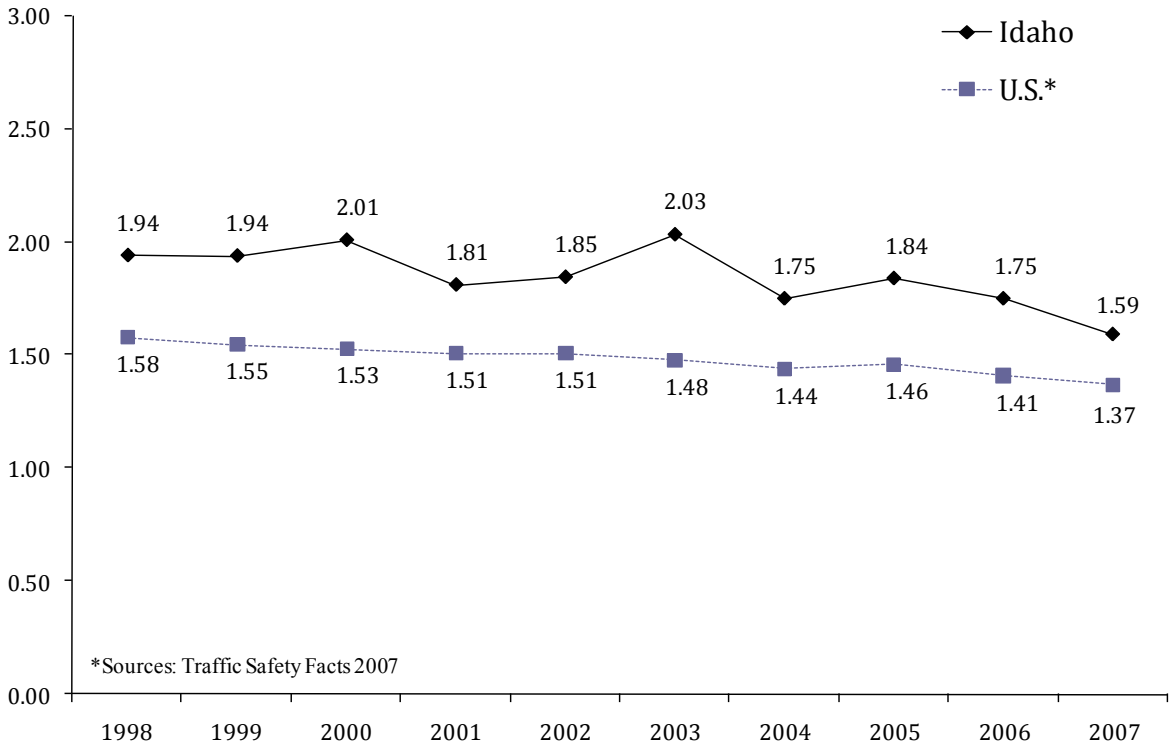
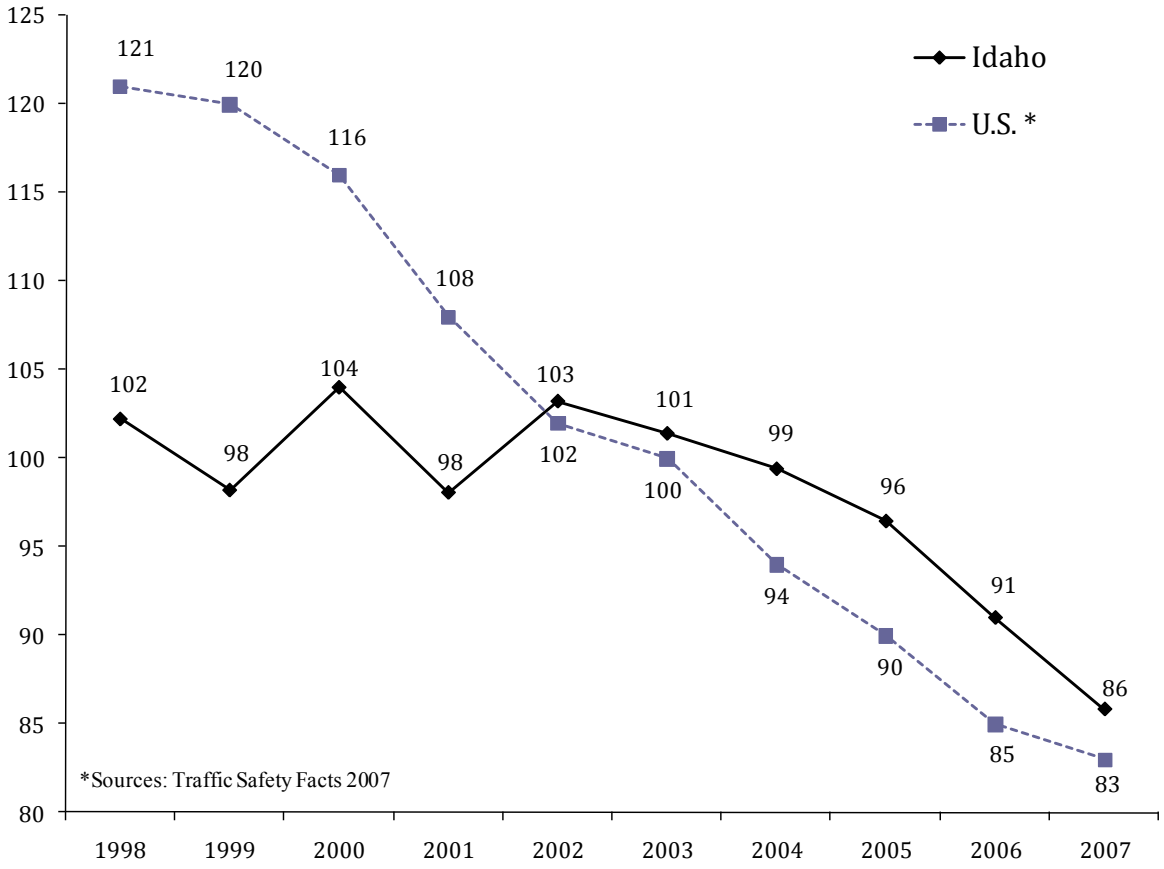


Figure 2
Traffic Injury Rates per 100 Million Annual Vehicle Miles of Travel: 1998-2007



Fatality and injury rates have varied over the past decade, but have generally decreased. Factors such as vehicle safety features, limited access highways, engineering improvements, occupant restraint usage, demographic changes and reduction in driving under the influence tend to reduce fatalities and injuries. Increases in AVMT, licensed drivers, registered vehicles, changes in reporting, and higher average speeds tend to increase the number of fatalities and injuries.

Injury Severity

Table 3 presents the injury severity distribution among persons involved in crashes from 2003 through 2007. The number of fatalities decreased to 252 in 2007.

Table 3
Injury Severity of Persons Involved in Traffic Crashes: 2003-2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2006-2007	Avg. Change 2003-2006
Fatalities	293	260	275	267	252	-5.6%	-2.8%
Serious Injuries	1,607	1,667	1,812	1,689	1,806	6.9%	1.9%
Visible Injuries	4,922	4,526	4,318	4,287	4,049	-5.6%	-4.5%
Possible Injuries	8,072	8,541	8,306	7,974	7,739	-2.9%	-0.3%
No Injuries	53,613	56,884	55,638	46,325	52,932	14.3%	-4.3%
Unknown / Missing	812	808	932	696	797	14.5%	-3.5%
Total Persons in Crashes	69,319	72,686	71,281	61,238	67,575	10.3%	-3.7%

Fatalities are rare events and are subject to a high degree of variability, meaning they randomly go up and down.

Economic Cost of Crashes

Table 4 gives estimated economic costs for Idaho motor vehicle crashes in 2007. The cost estimates for preventing a fatality was revised by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)[1] in February 2008. The costs for each injury type had not been established by the time of publication. Each injury type cost was established by determining the percentage the injury cost was in relation to the cost of a fatality in 2006. This was a substantial increase over the previous cost estimate adjusted for inflation. The estimated cost of Idaho crashes in 2007 was over $2.8 billion.

Table 4
Economic Cost of Idaho Crashes: 2007 Estimates

Incident Description	Total Occurrences	Cost Per Occurrence	Cost Per Category
Fatalities	252	$5,800,000	$1,461,600,000
Serious Injuries	1,806	$288,845	$521,653,836
Visible Injuries	4,049	$80,904	$327,579,658
Possible Injuries	7,739	$53,628	$415,026,747
Property Damage Only	17,000	$6,209	$105,546,609
Total Estimate of Economic Cost			**$2,831,406,850**

The cost of traffic crashes in 2007 amounts to $1,888 for every person in Idaho.

In addition to the FHWA's study, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) also did a study on the costs of crashes. The NHTSA study not only concentrated on the costs of crashes but also who pays the costs. Table 5 is a combination of Table 22 and Table 23 from the NHTSA study, "The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2000"[2] and shows the source of payment distribution of crash costs for each component of the costs. The total percentage for each source of payment is also included at the bottom.

Table 5
Estimated Source of Payment for Each Motor Vehicle Crash Cost Component[2]

	Federal	State	Total Government	Insurer	Other	Self	Total
Medical	14.40%	9.76%	24.16%	54.85%	6.36%	14.62%	100.00%
Emergency Service	3.87%	75.75%	79.62%	14.74%	1.71%	3.93%	100.00%
Market Productivity	16.20%	3.06%	19.26%	41.09%	1.55%	38.10%	100.00%
Household Productivity	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.09%	1.55%	57.36%	100.00%
Insurance Administration	0.89%	0.51%	1.40%	98.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Workplace Costs	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Legal / Court	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Travel Delay	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Property Damage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	65.00%	0.00%	35.00%	100.00%
Percentage of Total Costs	**6.41%**	**2.70%**	**9.11%**	**50.26%**	**14.48%**	**26.15%**	**100.00%**

The most significant point from the above table is that society at large picks up nearly 75% of all crash costs incurred by individual motor vehicle crash victims. These costs are passed on to the general public through insurance premiums, taxes, direct out-of-pocket payments for goods and services, and increased charges for medical care.[2]

Contributing Circumstances in Crashes

Figure 12 portrays the seven most prevalent contributing circumstances recorded for fatal crashes, injury crashes, and all crashes. For every vehicle involved in a crash, the investigating officer may indicate up to three circumstances that may have contributed to the occurrence of the crash.

Figure 12
Top Seven Primary Contributing Circumstances Cited for Traffic Crashes in 2007